


# Practical tips to make your tree planting successful and fun

Volunteers at Greenpop's Zambia Festival of Action 2015 prepare compost for tree  planting. (Courtesy of Greenpop)

If you have accepted the [Earth Day challenge](#) to help plant 7.8 billion trees by 2020, thank you! But you may have questions like 'How do I start?' or 'What do I need?' Fortunately, Misha Teasdale and Lauren O'Donnell, the South African founders of [Greenpop](#), and some of your fellow YALI Network members are able to help with some tips and things to consider as you plan your event.

Greenpop learned from their 81-year-old director of Trees in Zambia that the first questions you should ask yourself are "what, where and why."

- Is your ultimate goal to provide shade, fertilizer, a future harvest, reforestation or something else? The answer helps inform where you want to plant and what type of trees.
- If personal or private land is unavailable, try municipal locations like schools, hospitals or prisons. The most important consideration is to find a place where people are willing to take responsibility to look after the trees and provide them with water and security after they have been planted.
- As an example, YALI Network member and Green Champion Umar Gambo Adamu worked with a local Nigerian NGO and found a newly built secondary school that needed both shade and beautification.
- You may be able to get free trees from your local government, especially when they have their own tree-planting events because they may have extras from their project or from the municipal nursery. You can also try local growers for free or discounted trees. Umar said he surveyed his local market before deciding upon a local botanic garden that would also provide him with grass and flowers to plant among his trees.
- Try to get trees that have already grown past the seedling stage, since they will be much stronger and will have a better chance of survival.

Make it fun and you will have no problem finding volunteers. You can initially reach out to friends, family and local organizations to help. Network member and Green Champion Petronilla Odhiambo said his project has attracted both church members and school members by offering side activities, free drinks and dancing. Bring musicians to entertain while people are working. Greenpop's founders have used their projects not only to appeal to those looking for something tangible to do about climate change, but also to people who have never seen townships or met communities near the planting sites, helping to bridge traditional social divisions as part of their environmental activities.

For the work itself, "start small," advises Greenpop, "especially if you are new at this." When Teasdale and O'Donnell first began, they had a project with 1,000 trees in mind. The first day, they managed to plant only five, and finally reached their goal after a month of work. Now, with much more experience both planting and mobilizing volunteers, they are very efficient. Their current record is 7,000 trees in one day, with the help of 400 people. But here are some things they learned along the way:


- Your work will be affected by factors such as the weather, the quality of the soil and how well you have organized your volunteer force in advance.
- Hot and sunny weather is always exhausting. Make sure you have a refreshment station in the shade, with plenty of water and sunblock for volunteers, and ask them to bring a good hat and a pair of gloves. If this will be an all-day project, bring food for them as well.
- Make sure your tools and trees are already on-site so the volunteers can get straight to work rather than have to wait around for them to arrive.
- Hard soil may require pickaxes to break up. Other recommended tools are spades/shovels, wheelbarrows, buckets for water, rice or burlap sacks to hold compost, pitchforks and rakes. Keep track of your tools — they are expensive!
- Bring ropes and stakes or some other means of supporting and protecting the trees after they are planted.
- You will want to mark the area you plant as a separate space. You can use rocks or even reuse trash and gather it into piles to help set the area apart.
- Organize your volunteers in advance. Some can be digging while others are bringing compost and others are planting the trees. It is more efficient than having everyone try to do all the tasks. Group leaders can ensure a standardized approach and quality control that will help make the area more attractive once you have finished.

Lastly, before everyone leaves, make sure your volunteers know how important their work is. “People need to understand the local and global value of what they did so they feel valuable,” said Greenpop’s O’Donnell. “People want to help, but they need to know what they are doing.”

Good luck and keep us posted with your work!

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## 6 Lessons I Learned Organizing a YALI Network Event

*In October 2015, Abisoye Ajayi (founder of Pearls Africa) participated in a YALI Network Tech  Camp designed to develop tools for grass-roots organizers in their communities. She planned her own YALI Network mini-tech camp to bring together community organizers around Lagos, Nigeria. What Abisoye learned from the experience can help Network members as they look to create their own events, big or small. And we’ve added a few of our own! Success is all in the planning.*

They say a journey of a thousand miles starts with a step; I took mine and fell flat on my face. Those were the words of my role model Jacqueline Novogratz, and they perfectly described my first few weeks trying to put together a mini-tech camp in Nigeria.

**Lesson 1: Spend more time developing your application forms so that you won’t spend 10 times more making a shortlist.**

I had plans for 20 participants. I received 37 applications, all beautifully crafted prose, beautiful in all ways except that I was to figure out which would be best suited for my mini-tech camp amongst all great applications.

I spent a week selecting the best 20. I read through their applications and did research on each participant. It was tough, but made for a better event!

*YALI adds: For your events, even small discussion groups, make sure the attendees fit the event you hope to hold. A planning session? Invite stakeholders who care about the issue and want to take action. A debate? Find opposing viewpoints to constructively discuss the issue. A learning event? Recruit individuals eager to learn more about that topic, perhaps from a certain group.*

## **Lesson 2: Star-stud your event! But have two or three facilitators for whom it would be a privilege to speak at your event.**

When I go to all these star-studded conferences with their star-studded speakers, I never would have imagined what chore it is to make stars shine in lower orbits. I had stars lined up for my tech camp, but I never knew it would be a chore trying to manage their schedules. They were really nice people but extremely busy — so busy that your heart would be in your mouth until they showed up. Many times during the days leading up to my event, I just had the feeling of an impending disappointment. That feeling you get after that speaker you had [solid] plans with suddenly isn't sure if she would be in the country on that day.

*YALI adds: Inviting local experts or speakers is a great way to provide multiple perspectives to your event. They can be other YALI Network members who can help facilitate the event, an expert on the issue to help lead a discussion or teach a session, or even a local leader or notable figure to provide an opening keynote or welcome.*

## **Lesson 3: Plan for delays in your program and call it “arrivals and networking.”**

On the day of the event, pray hard it doesn't rain! Especially if your event is on Lagos Island. This would have been the last thing I could have envisaged but somehow, rain happened! In Lagos, the bustling capital of excellence, once it rains everything slows down, grinding to a halt. Luckily for us on the day of the event, the rain started five minutes to the arrival time and it lasted about five minutes. But that was enough to warn me about many late arrivals.

*YALI adds: No matter what the reason, people will always arrive late to events. Make sure you build in time for delays, transportation issues, and check in — a great time to have attendees network with one another, and start on small brainstorming or discussion questions. Light refreshments and networking, or even “ice breakers” to get to know each other, are great to fill time as more individuals arrive.*



## **Lesson 4: Make the program as flexible as possible such that the delay of one facilitator doesn't affect the event flow.**

Like the many movies that have framed my view of the world, I like it when the actor comes in [to save the day] to the climax of a Hans Zimmer score. But life's not like that! So I had planned the

event to be kicked off by a notable personality and enshrined it in the program of events. Unfortunately, my notable personality did not arrive on time so my program was delayed.

*YALI adds: Build in redundancies and always have a back-up plan should your guests not arrive on time or at all. Be careful about building your event around one person or specific groups in particular. Make sure you focus on the goals of the event. Confirm with your guests in advance so that you can cancel or postpone if their presence is critical.*

### **Lesson 5: Be ready to capture the energy of the meeting. Collect feedback and be ready to continue the conversation after the event.**

When you bring three of the most bright and passionate ladies in a room, expect a big response. We started strong and the energy did not stop until the end — it was a full immersion into the world of storytelling. The participants were all excited to see that they could do much more with the social media tools they were already exposed to, and collaborations began to form. All the organizations working on child rape issues realized that they could amplify the cases, which they became involved with daily through social media, so they decided to work together to create a platform for that. Also, all the participants wanted a more prolonged interaction so we created a Whatsapp group to continue the conversations. This made me realize that you don't expect to give people a good meal without anticipating they will ask for more.

*YALI adds: A single event is a great first step toward community action and change. Make sure you engage with the most active individuals in attendance and continue to work with them long after the event is over. Work together to find a common cause or challenge to solve together.*

Finally, Angels are real. I had a lot of help preparing for my mini-tech camp. Ask for assistance from friends and colleagues who you can call when you are tired and a minute from giving up altogether. Perhaps this is the most important lesson: Always ask for help! There are people who know more than you at organizing workshops, would be honored to help you, or also have set out to solve similar problems. If you are lucky, your Angels might be as nice as mine. ☺

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## **Agroforestry: Good for Yields, Good for the Environment**

Abdala Liingilie checks on a test field of maize in Tanzania.(Courtesy photo)



By integrating tree crops into your farm and ranch land, you can improve your harvests, diversify your income and help fight the effects of climate change in the process.

The land use system known as agroforestry is already being used across Africa to help replenish depleted soils. By growing “fertilizer trees,” such as species of acacia, farmers are adding nitrogen

to the soil and increasing their grain production by two or three times, while the trees help absorb carbon emissions contributing to climate change and provide wildlife habitats.

One of your fellow YALI Network members, Tanzania's Abdala Liingilie, has been encouraging agroforestry among farmers in the Kongwa and Kiteto districts who usually grow maize, beans, sunflower, ground nuts and finger millet.

With support from the [World Agroforestry Centre](#) and the U.S. Agency for International Development, Liingilie ran six research trials and helped train 250 farmers during the 2013-2014 growing season. In 2015, he mobilized more than 650 farmers to work in intercropping trials. The group planted about 300,000 tree seedlings among crops and houses.

Farmers who adopt agroforestry can expand their income opportunities, Liingilie said. For example, by having both trees and crops on their land, they can raise bees and then sell their beeswax and honey. By planting trees as canopies for ground crops they can earn money by selling the trees' high-value fruit, timber and resins.

Agroforestry can also include these other benefits:

- Improved water quality through reduced nutrient and soil runoff.
- An increased number of drought-resistant trees, including those that produce fruits, nuts and edible oils.
- Home-grown wood fuel, reducing deforestation and pressure on woodlands.
- Less need for insecticides, herbicides and other toxic chemicals.
- Increased crop stability.

The type of agroforestry you pursue can depend on the land conditions and your goals:

- Alley cropping: planting trees between rows of already grown shrubs or trees.
- Riparian forest buffers: planting trees next to bodies of water.
- Silvopasture: sustainable integration of grazing land and forestry.
- Windbreaks: planting trees or shrubs to manage the effect of wind on erosion and soil moisture.

Here is a link to [resources and contacts](#) on how to get your agroforestry project underway in different African regions.

Liigilie's advice for other YALI Network members is simple: "Don't give up. ... Changes start with you. Be ready to handle them in positive ways."

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**[Want healthier soil? Don't plow your fields.](#)**



If you have been farming for years, it may be difficult to break from the tradition of plowing your fields and feeding crop residue like maize stalks or wheat stubble to livestock rather than leaving it in place. But climate change is forcing many to rethink their traditional farming methods, and the practice of conservation tillage (also called conservation agriculture) has been shown to reduce soil erosion and retain moisture for plant roots. It also saves labor!

Conservation tillage methods include no-till, strip-till, ridge-till and mulch-till.

- No-till and strip-till involve planting crops directly into residue from the previous season's crop that hasn't been tilled (no-till) or has been tilled only in narrow strips with the rest of the field left untilled (strip-till).
- Ridge-till involves planting row crops on permanent ridges about 12 centimeters high. The previous crop's residue is cleared off ridges into adjacent furrows. Maintaining the ridges is essential.
- Mulch-till is a method that leaves at least 30 percent of the soil surface covered with crop residue.

The goal with all of these methods is to minimize soil disturbances. This helps to build the soil's health and its ability to hold moisture, allowing crops to grow better during dry weather extremes. Farmers also benefit by:

- Reducing soil erosion by as much as 60 percent, depending on the tillage method and amount of residue left to shield soil from rain and wind.
- Adding healthy organic matter to soil.
- Decreasing their expenditures on fuel and planting because fewer tractor trips across the field are needed.
- Reducing potential air pollution from dust and diesel emissions.
- Reducing soil compaction that can interfere with plant growth.

Over time, conservation tillage accompanied by crop rotation and the use of cover crops has been shown to increase harvest yields, in addition to helping the soil. The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) did a case study in Tanzania that showed that by the sixth season, crop yields had increased from three bags of maize and one to two bags of beans per acre to 30 bags of maize and 10 bags of beans per acre.

Interested in learning more? Here are some practical steps from an [FAO publication](#) to get you started.

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**April 22, 2016, is a good day for Africa.  
Here's why:**

A view of South Africa's beautiful Namaqualand countryside in bloom. (© AP Images) 

On Earth Day 2016 more than 120 countries who are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will meet in New York City to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change. This is an important step in the process to formally ratify and bring into effect the December 2015 Paris Agreement as scheduled by 2020.

For Africans, who are already seeing some of the effects of climate change, the Paris Agreement offers a more hopeful future by limiting global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius and establishing ways developing countries can create jobs through renewable energy technologies while reducing energy costs for consumers.

- Unlike the 1995 Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement takes the situation of the developing world into account by encouraging “nationally determined” action in the global efforts to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Developed countries are continuing their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion per year for mitigation and adaptation actions through 2025, when the parties will design a new financing plan.
- African countries will be able to define their commitments based on their own priorities, with support through finance, technology and capacity building.
- Through the renewable energy sector, the continent has the potential to create an estimated [2.5 million](#) temporary and permanent jobs.
- With more efficient and clean energy sources like solar power, African households could save up to [\\$8 billion](#), helping to lift 16 million to 26 million people out of poverty.

Four African countries will directly benefit from investment projects approved by the [Green Climate Fund](#) board in November 2015, and the fund plans to scale up its operations further in 2016.

- Malawi is increasing its use of modernized climate information and early warning systems.
- Senegal is increasing the resilience of its ecosystems and communities through the restoration of productive bases of its salinized lands.
- Rwanda and Kenya will benefit from the KawiSafi Ventures Fund, which will provide them with off-grid solar and other clean energy technologies.

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**[A special conversation between YALI Network Coordinator Macon Phillips and South African climate change agent Catherine Constantinides in the lead up to #EarthDay2016](#)**

<https://soundcloud.com/americanagovfr/yali-network-discussion-between-macon-phillips-and-catherine-constantinides>

[Macon Phillips] Hello YALI Network. It's Macon Phillips coming to you from Washington, D.C., with a special message about Earth Day. That's right, Earth Day is on Friday, April 22nd. We wanted to make sure that everyone knows about this important moment. You're organizing events in your communities, you're talking to folks about climate change, about the environment, and we're really excited about the YALI Goes Green initiative that we've been pushing to raise awareness about important climate issues. Today I wanted, in addition to sending you this reminder, to offer you a special treat. We have been working on a YALI podcast that's going to be coming out soon. We had a great conversation with a member of the YALI Network. As part of that I wanted to get to you even sooner, before we even started the podcast. So without further adieu, this is Catherine Constantinides who comes to us from South Africa and we asked her about Earth Day. Hope you enjoy it.

[Catherine Constantinides] So Earth Day's a huge deal for me. This year Earth Day I'll be doing several things throughout the week. One will be a Twitter chat that we host on Wednesday night and then on Earth Day itself we're going to launch a campaign. And the campaign specifically stems from a huge challenge we have found here in South Africa, where we've had the biggest municipal collection of our waste come to a halt.

[Macon] When people ask you what do you do, which I'm sure you get a lot, how do you answer that?

[Catherine] I think the easiest way to describe it very quickly and in a nutshell is, I describe myself as an international climate activist and a humanitarian who focuses on human rights issues across our continent.

[Macon] Why climate? I know that there's a number of other issues within the human rights area, but why do you lead with climate? Why is that the most important?

[Catherine] You know, through my work, I have actually seen how climate change has affected our people across the continent. How people are no longer able to live the way that they used to 10, 15, 20, even 5 years ago. We see here in our country in South Africa the drought has affected us in a huge way, especially over this past summer season. We have seen people who are dying and people who are termed climate refugees.

[Macon] So I think one of the challenges that we run into with climate change, this has certainly been the case in the United States, it's pretty clear where you paint a picture of where the problem is. To run through all the effects that the change in climate is having on food security, on the weather patterns, and the list goes on and on. But you almost do that at the cost of painting such a dismal picture — people wonder what we can do about it. So what's your message to your peers? I guess, where should they start? And what are actions that people can take and inspire others to take?

[Catherine] So I think first, identify the problem, work collectively, and also you need to really understand that education and awareness around climate change and the issues underneath that big umbrella needs to be unpacked at a local level for people to understand. And allowing the community to feel like they can take responsibility to look at the small things that they can do within their home, at work, and within their communities; those are the ways that we're going to be able to solve the climate injustices that we do see across our continent.



[Macon] Well wonderful, I really enjoyed the conversation; it's really nice to see you again. Congratulations on being named a Washington Mandela Fellow, so we look forward to hosting you when you come out here to the States. Until then, if you have any other thoughts or feedback about podcasts or things generally, I know you're not too shy about reaching out, so I look forward to hearing from you.

[Catherine] Awesome. Thank you so much and thank you for the opportunity. And again thank you for an amazing platform that allows us as young Africans to really be inspired by each other through this specific network.

[Macon] Awesome. Okay, have a great day.

[Catherine] Take care, you too, bye.

[Macon] Bye.

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## The goal is to plant 7.8 billion trees by 2020. Can you help?

(© AP Images)



Many Africans are [already feeling the effects](#) of climate change. Not only does the daytime heat sap your energy, but it's also hotter at night and harder to sleep. The number of droughts and floods has doubled across the continent over the past 25 years, creating natural disasters that ultimately affect everyone by reducing crop yields and livestock production.

Can planting trees help mitigate these challenges? Yes! And this year's [theme for Earth Day](#) is "Trees for the Earth: Let's Get Planting." The goal is to plant 7.8 billion trees over the next four years — one for every person — in time for Earth Day's 50th anniversary in 2020.

Stay tuned to the [yali.state.gov](http://yali.state.gov) blog and learn how you can participate by organizing your own tree-planting activities. In the meantime, here are some reasons why restoring nearby forests and planting trees in your neighborhood will help you and your community. They provide much more than food, fuel and shelter.

- Trees directly combat climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect. One hectare of forest can offset the yearly emissions of between [333 and 417 cars](#).
- Trees clean the air by removing dust and absorbing pollutants like carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide and trapping them in their leaves and bark.
- Tree roots improve water quality by holding soil in place and preventing erosion and water runoff.

They also prevent harmful chemicals from entering streams.

- Trees moderate heat by providing shade and preserve warmth by blocking strong winds. With proper placement of trees around your home, [you can save](#) 20 to 50 percent of heating expenses and reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent.
- Trees improve your mood and health. They are aesthetically pleasing, adding natural elements to urban settings that might otherwise consist of concrete and metal. Having shaded areas in cities and developed areas will encourage more outdoor activities and social interaction.

These are only a few of the reasons why Earth Day 2016 is encouraging everyone to start or support a tree-planting initiative. This blog will soon be sharing some practical tips from your fellow YALI Networkers on how you can participate.

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## **Unleashing the Entrepreneur in Every Woman**


“We believe that everyone is an entrepreneur,” said Takunda Chingonzoh, a 2014 Mandela Washington Fellow and YALI Network member. “It’s only a matter of people finding that aspect of themselves.”

Last year, Chingonzoh and his team focused on helping one particular group find that aspect of themselves: women. They did it through their organization Neolab Technology.

Founded in 2012, Neolab began with a goal to develop technology fit for Africa. It has since grown into “a startup factory.” The Neolab team recruits university students, trains them in entrepreneurship and forms them into teams. The teams work together to transform their ideas into sustainable enterprises.

Since then, Neolab launched its first training course exclusively for women.

### **Moments of Inspiration**

Five Model X participants work together  on a finance management and literacy application. (Neolab)

The inspiration for such a course began in the United States while Chingonzoh was participating in the Mandela Washington Fellowship. During class discussions, he observed that comments from the male Fellows relied more on generic knowledge while those from the female Fellows revealed a deep connectedness to the community.

“That was the initial spark,” Chingonzoh said.

That spark ignited when Chingonzoh witnessed speeches from National Security Advisor Susan Rice, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and first lady Michelle Obama.

"I could see the kind of energy, the kind of presence they commanded and how it affected people," Chingonzoh said. "It was inspiring."

Through these experiences, Chingonzoh came to understand the roles women can play in leadership and technology and the valuable perspective they offer.

"I had been exposed to women in technology who were doing amazing things," Chingonzoh said. "So my question was 'How do you activate that same kind of drive in the women that we have in our societies?'"

## Training Exclusively for Women


For Chingonzoh and the Neolab team, the answer rested with providing a training class exclusively for women. They recruited 12 women from the local university and ran them through their standard seven-week training curriculum, which they call "Model X."

The first part of Model X focuses on "activating the entrepreneur," Chingonzoh explained. The second part hones more conventional skills such as idea validation and team building.

For the women-only training, however, Neolab had to add an additional training element to its curriculum: confidence building.

"They would talk about these great ideas," Chingonzoh said, "but they would not have the confidence to push them across."

## Gender Differences

University students participate in a focus  group as part of an "unconference" hosted by Neolab Technology. (Neolab Technology)

In addition to their lack of confidence, Chingonzoh noticed another characteristic that set these women apart. They wanted to solve problems. They didn't want to create the next Facebook; they wanted to develop sustainable solutions that would help people and communities.

These women also displayed a dedication and tenacity Chingonzoh had not seen before.

"In the first class, you're the one asking people to do this, this and this. With the women, by the third or fourth class, they're the ones asking 'What's next? What can we do? How do we do this?'" Chingonzoh said. "They were taking the course with way more vigor and more drive than we had seen in previous classes."

For Chingonzoh and his team, the results of this women-only training have been both "amazing" and transformative. Neolab has not only decided to host a women-only training course every year, but also to shake up the gender balance of its training team. Chingonzoh said it's important for the


women being trained to see other women in leadership roles. He believes this will provide them with a person whom they can relate to and will also boost their self-confidence.

“It’s really important to publicize and celebrate the women that we have in our networks who are doing all these incredible and amazing things, because that in itself serves as a way to activate even more women and even more girls to break out and lift up their communities,” he said.

To learn more about Neolab Technology, visit its [Facebook page](#).


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## **Women and Girls: A Sound Investment**

For every year of secondary schooling a girl receives, her earning power increases  by 15–25 percent. (UN/Christopher Herwig)

Some of you have asked, “Why should we focus on women and girls? Why shouldn’t we focus on empowering everyone — women and girls, men and boys?” It’s a good question. The answer is because a gap exists between the opportunities and resources available to men and boys and those available to women and girls.

According to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), 1 in 3 girls around the world will experience gender-based violence in their lifetimes, 1 in 5 girls in the developing world who enroll in primary school never finish, and 1 in 7 girls in the developing world are forced into marriage before their 15th birthdays.

Women make up nearly 64 percent  of Rwanda’s Chamber of Deputies and nearly 39 percent of Rwanda’s Senate. Many credit women’s political participation in Rwanda with helping the country recover from its civil war. (Rwanda Government)

A girl’s situation does not improve with age. According to the [World Health Organization](#), complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading cause of death for girls aged 15–19 globally. According to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO), women own just between 10 and 20 percent of the world’s land, despite making up more than 40 percent of its agricultural labor force. And according to [USAID](#), women-owned enterprises make up as little as 10 percent of all businesses in Africa.

Whether in the classroom, the hospital or the office, women and girls face challenges unique to their

gender. The good news is that even a small investment in a woman or a girl can have a huge return.

## When Women Succeed, Society Succeeds


Investing in women and girls means taking actions — big and small — to bring about gender equality. It means changing society's attitudes and behaviors toward women and girls. It means rethinking the roles and responsibilities of women and girls. It means creating a world where women and girls enjoy the same human rights and have access to the same opportunities as men and boys.

Investing in women and girls isn't just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. Here are some benefits investing in women and girls can have:

- **Stronger democracies.** Women's participation in politics has tangible gains for democracy. According to USAID, countries where women hold at least 30 percent of political seats are more inclusive, egalitarian and democratic. Not only that, it also found that higher rates of women's political participation are associated with lower levels of government corruption.
- **Improved public service delivery.** Including women in the political space has benefits for citizens, too, because women are more likely to invest in the public good than their male counterparts. In India, for example, USAID found that political districts with more female representatives enjoyed greater community benefits such as investments in drinking water facilities and roadways.
- **Enhanced food security.** The FAO estimates that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent. That would be enough to feed an additional 150 million people.
- **More lasting peace.** When women play a role in conflict situations, they become drivers of reconciliation and reconstruction. Evidence shows that including women in conflict-related decision-making and peace-building efforts can lead to more durable, comprehensive and widely accepted peace agreements.
- **Greater economic growth.** According to USAID, when 10 percent more girls go to school, a country's GDP will grow on average by 3 percent. And a girl's individual earning power increases by 15-25 percent for every year of secondary schooling she receives.

These are just a few ways investing in women and girls enables a community, a country and a continent to flourish.

## What's Next?

By including women in the  peacekeeping process, countries ensure more lasting and just outcomes following conflict.  
(UN/Christopher Herwig)

As Secretary Kerry said, "No country can succeed unless every citizen is empowered to contribute to its future. And no peace can endure if women are not afforded a central role."

We hope that you commit to investing in women and girls. It can be something as simple as reading

a book to your younger sister or as elaborate as hosting a series of financial literacy workshops for women in your community. The goal is to act and, through your actions, bring about a more equal, prosperous and secure world for everyone.

Think of the impact the YALI Network could make if all 230,000 of you act.

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## Tapping the Entrepreneurial Potential of Africa's Women

Amini Kajunju (Courtesy photo)



"I feel like African women are some of the most entrepreneurial women in the world," said Amini Kajunju. "Many African women become entrepreneurs because that's where the opportunities are."

Kajunju has been studying entrepreneurship and advising entrepreneurs for her entire career. A native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she was a program manager at the International Executive Service Corps, which provides free consulting services to businesses in developing countries. She also spent 10 years advising under-resourced entrepreneurs in the New York City area as executive director of the Workshop in Business Opportunities.

Now Kajunju is president and CEO of the Africa-America Institute, a U.S.-based organization working to promote development in Africa. In 2013, she was named among Forbes' 20 Young Power Women in Africa.

In spite of their entrepreneurial potential, women in the workplace still face significant challenges in Africa and most other countries in the world, Kajunju says. When shown a selection of comments from YALI Network's [#Africa4Her Virtual Town Hall](#) in which men expressed the belief that women made difficult bosses, she said, "I think views like that are common everywhere." She thinks they will be less common when more women are in leadership positions and are building businesses. "Entrepreneurship can hopefully create a meritocracy that can break down some of these barriers," she said. "Because you're not going to sell your products if you're just hiring friends of friends, whether they have skills or not."

When it comes to advice for entrepreneurs both male and female, Kajunju keeps it simple:

- 1) Know your target market and what your product or service can do for them.
- 2) Hire or work with people who are smarter than you and help them be as productive as possible by being kind and fair.
- 3) Develop thought-leadership within your industry. Share information within your marketplace.

“That’s why entrepreneurship is so amazing to me,” she said, “because it’s the opportunity to set your own rules. Those who join your team get to abide by those rules. And if those rules are about inclusion, gender parity, respect, hard work, productivity, then it doesn’t matter if you’re a man or a woman. We can all rally around those ideas.”

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